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Executive Guide on United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations

Summary

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this codification system can be used to improve the exchange of data.

UN/LOCODE is widely used by the transport industry and by government administrations as well as other by actors. A network of National and Sectoral Focal Points as well as an Advisory Group has been set up to support the maintenance and development of UN/LOCODE. It is one of the most downloaded standards on the UNECE website, all divisions combined.

This document is submitted to the twenty-fourth UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) identifies locations related to international trade around the world. It is a five-character code where the first two characters represent the International Standards Organization (ISO) country code followed by a three-character code unique within that country. These codes have been maintained and published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat since 1981. Updates and new entries are published twice yearly (cut off dates for submissions are 30 April and 31 October).

2. In order to ensure the precise identification of national locations, the UNECE relies on a network of national focal points to validate all new entries and update requests before they are published. The national focal points also work with key stakeholders in an Advisory Group in order to propose improvements in processes and maintenance.

3. The basis of UN/LOCODE is UNECE Recommendation 16. The first edition was published in 1980 and has been updated twice since. The first issue of UN/LOCODE had 8000 codes and today has over 100,000 from 249 countries, dependent territories and special areas.

II. Applications

4. UN/LOCODE is widely used by most major shipping companies, freight forwarders, and the maritime and manufacturing industries. It is also used by national Governments, especially by customs and port authorities, and in related activities such as statistics.

5. Each UN/LOCODE entry provides several details, such as the subdivision of the location country code, the function of the location (maritime port, airport, road hub, etc.), an indicative geolocation coordinate, and the status of the entry (if it has been validated by a national administration, an economic operator or other), etc..

III. Benefits

6. By using UN/LOCODE, operators and authorities can unambiguously identify where transport services begin, where goods will enter an economy and where the goods will be cleared—without needing to know national codes or national languages. It is used for goods movements associated with trade and for use in information exchange between participants in international trade.

IV. More information

7. Link to UN/LOCODE page of website (http://www.unece.org/cefact/locode/welcome.html)